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1895—1955

WHAT NOW?

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# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

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VOL. 48. No. 4

APRIL, 1955

## 1895—1955

### WHAT NOW ?

IT IS APPROPRIATE that a forward-looking body like the A.A.L. should make its Diamond Jubilee an occasion for self-questioning, for a reconsideration of aims and policy. We have accordingly invited a number of friends and critics to discuss these questions in this Jubilee issue, and we hope that as many members as possible will take part in the subsequent discussion, so that we may emerge from 1955 with a sure knowledge of our present deficiencies and a clear sense of future purpose.

But even the A.A.L. may be excused a brief backward glance on such an occasion. Our Golden Jubilee issue (Sept.-Oct., 1945) contained a bold marshalling of 50 years' officers, and the memories of our first two Presidents (W. Benson Thorne and W. C. Berwick Sayers) and Gurner P. Jones, our longest serving Hon. Secretary. We have invited Mr. Sayers to contribute to this issue some further reflections upon our 60 years of life.

But the time is not yet ripe for a full scale history of the Association. Instead in a year in which we are conscious as never before of the need for a dynamic and constructive policy if our continued existence is to be justified, we have gathered from early issues of the *Library Assistant* some statements of our early aims and ideals which may have fresh meaning for us to-day.

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# SOME JUBILEE MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS

by W. C. BERWICK SAYERS, *Hon. F.A.A.L.*

## I.

SO WE HAVE reached our Diamond Jubilee. We must have vitality to have survived so long; useless organizations go the way of the unnecessary much sooner. We show no signs of that yet. But it is, as our Editor seems to think, worth while to take a glance at the past, the present and the future, to see what has been and is the justification of our being.

It was in May, 1904, a week or so after my arrival in Croydon, that I attended a meeting of the Library Assistants' Association—forgive the use for once of the old name—when James Duff Brown read a paper at St. Bride's Institute where the Association usually met; and at this very first meeting the Chairman, Evan G. Rees of Westminster, invited me to follow Jast in the discussion—which I did with much trepidation and no doubt small result, being as innocent then of knowledge of the subject; annotation, as most of the assembly were. Note that these were all "chief" librarians, although others took part; and chief meant something then. It distinguished a race apart, masters of their libraries, and only now coming slowly to know that assistants had souls of their own. Within a month I went to tea with the Hon. Secretary, Geo. Ed. Roebuck, as he signed himself, one of the creative librarians of my own generation who is too little remembered now. At that meeting I was somehow co-opted to the Committee and became Hon. Secretary of the Education Committee, charged with the arrangement of the meetings and a number of other duties.

Nine years had passed since the founding of the Association with about two-score members, and R. A. Peddie as the first Chairman. Already some of its earlier stalwarts had gone from active participation: the ingenious Bertram L. Dyer to Kimberley; F. Meaden Roberts to Whitechapel; A. W. Wood, eloquence itself, to the seclusion of Westminster from which, to my own regret, he too infrequently emerged; and not a few others of whom I am unable to write as they were not in action when I was in the Association. Our Committee was manned by such men as Rees, Roebuck, Benson Thorne, Hugh Smith of Bishopsgate, J. D. Young of Greenwich, John Rivers of Hampstead—then our most cultured Editor, and author of at least one folio on a French artist—and we had a too severe, indeed somewhat dour Hon. Treasurer in W. George Chambers of Woolwich. Earlier Committee meetings, I am told, were held in pubs, but not in my time. A Chaucer House was not even in our dreams then; we met at St. Bride Library, a few times at the Bishopsgate or the Cripplegate Institute, and other places which were quite hospitable to us.

## II.

Our aims and objects were, in the first place, to produce a situation that would provide an assistant with friends in every library; secondly, to establish a platform, because we had many grievances as well as some aspirations to air; above all, to increase our deserving by the acquirement of qualifications that intelligent people would recognise—we did not even despair of committees and councillors.

The early history of the L.A.A. was a progressive demonstration of our desire to break down the isolation of the library assistant, to train

him so that he could no longer in justice be spoken of by his chief as something a little less than his wife's general skivvy. We recognised that to talk of a "profession" when we were uncultivated and uncultured was not impressive. I had been advised when I was at Bournemouth that the L.A. exams. were "too stiff; no one should expect them of a librarian." At Croydon I learned that L.A. exams. really were taken, and by quite ordinary assistants, and concluded that if I meant to remain in this service I should take them, too. I did, and was the first diplomate of the Association and the only one that has taken an honours diploma by getting honours in four subjects, this in two years. That is not merely a boast; it is an indication of my own attitude, in which I was supported by Jast, and helped immeasurably by working with and learning from James D. Stewart, who had an uncanny grasp of technique and an enviable gift for imparting it. The Association was a derivation of the early L.A. Summer Schools; it was represented on the L.A. Education Sub-Committee, at any rate in the early stages; it had its own correspondence study circles; an "evercirculator" system (in which a file was started on a subject and passed round from one member to another, each adding his own contribution; when the circuit was complete it reversed its course so that every contributor benefited by the work of the rest); we established "proficiency tests" in which anyone might participate—and some did—when questions were set and answered at home, and J. D. Brown and other important chiefs acted as our assessors. Many of our meetings were addressed by chiefs, although some of us were vocal enough.

From 1896 we had been exercised about formal classes. Three years later our gifted Hon. Secretary and Editor of the *Library Assistant* wrote (*L.A.*, v. 1, 1899): "How the question of an adequate education for library assistants will be solved I do not pretend to say . . . If pupil teacher training centres are possible library centres are possible. But to have these it is necessary that assistants attend them during official hours, and that library committees support such centres—even Education Boards. To-day it may seem quixotic and utterly beyond the region of probability to say such centres will ever come into existence. But . . . the world does not seem to move, but 'e pur si muove,' as Galileo said."

Well may the *Library Assistant* have borne on its cover

*The little—done;*

*The undone—vast!*

But, we had, by 1906, winter courses in librarianship at the London School of Economics: Historical Bibliography by A. W. Pollard, Library Administration by J. D. Brown, Cataloguing by J. Henry Quinn, and Classification by L. S. Jast—I attended them all. But it took twenty years from the time when Dyer wrote for the full-time library school to come, and another twenty before the first, at University College, found any companion. Some classes had been held, and gave rise to the campaign of the L.A.A. to exclude students who were not already in libraries, but it failed, and was only the echo of a memory in my time.

These memories are a confusion of bits and pieces from the past, but they should convey the idea that we were struggling, against a difficult, penurious background for longer vision, better equipment and some sort of status. A good deal had been achieved, and by the time I became Hon. Secretary the beginnings of our techniques were there and our ambition in public libraries to be freed from the penny rate limit was growing. Nevertheless my own efforts were directed to enlarging the Association, linking up with the L.A. and making ourselves a little more impressive.

The L.A.A. would have no affiliation with the L.A. I led for it and was defeated by about 20 votes. I suggested that someone should have the courage to make an onslaught on our title. "Society of Assistant Librarians" would be an infinitely better name," but that cut no ice at that time. Even now, however, I think S.A.L. more pronounceable than A.A.L., and less likely to be muddled with A.L.A. It took a long time for the idea to settle anyway. We needed branches. I had a salary by now rising to £200, which in 1907 was considered good—anyway it was worth £1,000 now, according to Dr. Savage's calculations of money value a little earlier. We had a North-Western Branch, but it petered out, or seemed to, before my time. What was wanted was one based on every large centre. So I stumped the country at my own expense, but with my Committee's approval—to Leeds, to Liverpool, Birmingham, Newcastle, Cardiff, Brighton; and small but active branches capable of growth emerged, owing to the enthusiasm of a leading assistant here and there. We revised the constitution to line on with that of the L.A.; we created Honorary Fellows and Fellows—librarians who wanted to stay with us after their "elevation"; the Committee became the Council, and the Chairman, President. (Thorne was the first). One of our most effective efforts was the enquiry into Hours and Conditions of Service and the resulting report which later reports have supplemented. It was essential to our aspirations. Then in some libraries we worked from 9 a.m. until 10 p.m. on four days, had a "half-day" at 2 p.m., and an early evening at 6 p.m. On five days our break for dinner (lunch now!) was 1½ hours, and for tea on four we had 1½. As for salaries, they were ludicrous except to their threadbare recipients; and only a very few libraries had any staff amenities at all.

When I became Hon. Secretary there were 190 members; when I most reluctantly left for Wallasey there were nearly 900. I suppose I wanted to be chief librarian and I was fortunate in being able to take with me the Hon. Librarian (and we have lived happily ever after). Otherwise—well, Wallasey was a delightful place and everyone there was good to me during my brief sojourn.

### III.

Prophecy is a gratuitous form of stupidity, as George Eliot wisely remarked, and my indulgence in it will be brief. We are not concerned now much with the past, with so vast and uncertain a future to occupy the whole capacities of our members. There were few men in my days who were over thirty-five in our ranks; the library world was younger. I was President at 26, and not younger than most of my companions. In that alone the A.A.L. differs, although it has all the younger ones as well in it. It consists predominantly of women, and the entry which my astonished eyes read in the first (or second) Committee Minute Book: "*Resolved*: that no woman shall be admitted in membership of the Association" was never effective and now is a joke. Their voting power, if exercised, could unseat every male; but as in parliamentary voting, women don't do such things. It is now a great society, exclusively professional and of much influence, but still its basic objects and activities are those of the little L.A.A. of sixty years ago, with enormous extensions; it is, in effect, that part of the Library Association which unites all its members who are not the finally responsible officers of their libraries. Therein has lain a current difficulty, inherent in all bodies who rule by the popular vote; we have often concerned ourselves in library politics. Fortunately there has usually existed the sense of responsibility. The Association owes a great deal to the initiative of fine men: at the



centre, Gurner Jones, James Revie, and later—to mention only two out of dozens—E. A. Clough and W. Tynemouth; and, primarily in the Branches but working towards and reaching the centre, from Leeds G. W. Strother and Norman Treliving, with James Ross of York, Checketts and Cashmore of Birmingham, Harry Farr at Cardiff, Wickens at Liverpool, Miss Gerard, Cecil Piper and Webb in Sussex, and Walton, Turnbull and W. Wilson in the North East. All these led the way for and with so many others. The organization now into Divisions (formally Branches), its innumerable meetings, its efficient management of correspondence tuition through continuous self-criticism, systematic courses and the exhaustive and invaluable post-mortem studies of examination questions (the most searching to which any profession known to me is subjected), the enterprise and bite of the official journal; what achievements these are, and how much unselfish work they represent, unpaid save by the gratitude which must be felt by those for whom it is done!

What of the future? The affiliation with the Library Association and the representation of the A.A.L. on its Committees and in its educational work as lecturers and teachers, members of the Board of Examiners, even Assessors—these things show the important position it holds. The future is full of problems as yet unsolved. Will the equalization of library posts and salaries impede the circulation of librarians? And, if so, what is the remedy? Will the specialization of every kind of librarian interfere with our unity? Will the profession become completely feminine as modern examinations at lower levels seem to promise—or threaten—and the future library be that of *Molly Hilton*? At how soon a date will every librarian be library-school trained? And will the hydrogen bomb solve these and a thousand other problems by removing libraries and the need for them?

Meanwhile the A.A.L. must pursue its ever-opening way, assured that its past has been good, and energized and sobered by the thought that at least ninety per cent of the chief librarians of the future are now in its ranks; that youth should dream, but also act, that librarians are only now beginning to take their real place in social life, and that the Association is a wonderful testing ground of ideas, a place of expression, a safety valve for our sillier utterances—for we all make them sometimes—and a fraternity and sorority of friends helpful to one another and determined to keep librarians and librarianship awake.

#### WHO'S WHO IN THE A.A.L.—2.

SAYERS, W. C. Berwick, formerly Chief Librarian, Croydon. Married to Olive E. Clarke, F.L.A., formerly of Islington P.L. and Hon. Librarian of the L.A.A. Three sons.

*Appointments:* Sub-librarian, Bournemouth, 1900-04; Sub-librarian, Croydon ("allowed to call himself Deputy after a year"), 1904-15; Chief Librarian, Wallasey, May-Sept., 1915; Chief Librarian, Croydon, 1915-47.

*Work for A.A.L.:* Hon. Secretary, Education Committee, 1904; Hon.

Secretary, 1905-8; Hon. Editor, 1908; President, 1909-12. Was elected to L.A. Council in 1912, and on accepting a chief-librarianship in 1915, was elected a Fellow of the A.A.L.

*Work for L.A.:* Nationally elected Councillor, 1912-1938 (with a break of one year); successively sub-editor of *L.A. Record*; Hon. Secretary, Education Committee; Chairman, Executive Committee; sometime examiner in Classification and Library Administration; Assessor for six years; President, 1938; subsequently Hon. Fellow.

# THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION

*signed on behalf of the Committee by R. A. Peddie, Chairman, and F. Meaden Roberts, Hon. Secretary, and presented to the Annual Meeting held at 20, Hanover Square, W., on July 1st, 1896.*

In presenting the first report of the Library Assistants' Association, the Committee are extremely gratified to be able to record the unvarying success which has attended the Association in the first year of its existence, and to acknowledge the support it has received from librarians and others interested in the profession.

A short account of the movement to establish the Association will, perhaps, be of interest here. During the progress of the Summer School of 1895 the need of such an Association was freely expressed among the students and the advisability of forming one discussed. It was decided to convene a meeting of library assistants to further consider the proposal. A meeting was accordingly held on July 3rd at the Library Bureau, when assistants from most of the public libraries in London were present, Mr. R. A. Peddie, of the Gladstone Library, National Liberal Club, being voted to the chair.

Mr. W. W. Fortune, Lewisham Public Library, who acted as hon. secretary, *pro. tem.*, in moving "That an Association of Library Assistants be formed," gave a brief description of the scope and objects of the proposed Association. Mr. E. H. Caddie, Battersea Public Libraries, seconded the motion, which, on being put to the meeting, was carried unanimously. A Provisional Committee of seven was elected to draft rules for the consideration of the next meeting.

The first General Meeting of the Association was held at 20, Hanover Square, on July 17th, when the Provisional Committee, who had met at Battersea Public Library, on July 10th, submitted a set of rules. These, with a few amendments, were adopted by the meeting, and the first officers and committee elected.

The Committee at once set to work to draw up a programme for the ensuing session. They decided to hold the meetings fortnightly, and this arrangement has been carried out during the whole of the session. The inaugural meeting took the form of a conversazione, held at the Felix Institute, Lavender Hill, on August 21st, but owing to many librarians and assistants being away for their holidays, the attendance was not so large as it otherwise would have been. As it was, about 80 members and friends were present.

At the first ordinary meeting, held on September 4th, a discussion was opened by the Chairman on "The Aims and Objects of the Library Assistants' Association," when many practical suggestions were made for the guidance of the Committee. . . .

It is suggested that during next session meetings shall be held monthly, instead of fortnightly, and a different plan will be adopted. The programme is being arranged so that at each alternate meeting only, will a paper be read, and at the others discussions will be held on practical questions. Nothing definite has however been decided upon yet, and the matter will be left over for next year's committee.

A great want is felt among library assistants in there being no classes where they might qualify for the examinations of the Library Association. A scheme is under consideration whereby such a class might be formed.

No arrangements have been made, but the general idea is to hold a class at 9.30 p.m. on some day other than Wednesday, at which time, with a little exertion, the majority of assistants could attend if they wished. The subject for the first course would probably be English Literature. No fee would be charged for the lectures, which would be limited to members.

A collection of books bearing upon all phases of library history and administration and text books necessary for the education of a librarian, is being formed, but at present does not contain many volumes. The funds are too small to allow of any books being purchased, and all that the library contains are gifts, or have been acquired with money given for this special purpose. It is hoped in time to get together a thoroughly useful library, and donations either of money or books will be gratefully accepted. A special feature is being made of library catalogues, and the Committee earnestly request that librarians will present copies of their catalogues and special lists of books. The library is deposited at St. Martin's Public Library, and the hon. librarian, Mr. A. H. Carter, will gladly acknowledge all donations. Rules for the issue of books will be found appended. . . .

The Association now numbers 54, ordinary members representing most of the London public libraries, and a few private and provincial libraries. In addition there are five honorary members. The Committee wish to point out that membership is not limited to assistants in London public libraries, but any assistant engaged in a library, public or private, in London or elsewhere, is eligible for election.

The heartiest thanks are given to Mr. MacAlister and the Library Association for the sympathy they have shown and the practical support they have given throughout the year. A room has always been available when necessary for meetings of the Association or Committee at 20, Hanover Square. On December 9th, Mr. Peddie read a paper on the Library Assistants' Association before the monthly meeting of the Library Association. The paper was well received, and in the discussion which followed all who spoke assured the former body of their cordial support. . . .

It is with extreme regret that the Committee learn that Mr. Peddie will sever his connection with the Association at the termination of the present session, owing to his many other engagements. During the twelve months that Mr. Peddie has acted as Chairman he has won the respect of all the members by the able and pleasant way in which he has conducted both the Committee and general meetings. The Committee wish to place on record their high appreciation of the services which he has rendered this Association from its very commencement.

This report would be incomplete did it not mention the valuable aid given by Mr. W. W. Fortune, the first hon. secretary, during the preliminary stages of the Association. Owing to receiving an appointment in the Library Bureau, Mr. Fortune was compelled to resign his post after a very short period of office.

In conclusion, the Committee would impress upon all assistants the necessity of joining in large numbers if really useful work is to be accomplished. By attending the meetings assistants are brought into contact with one another; ideas and experiences are exchanged, and that good-fellowship established which cannot fail to be of influence for the good of the profession in general.

## HOW BEST TO INCREASE THE USEFULNESS OF THE L.A.A.

by B. L. DYER (Hon. Secretary-Editor, 1898-1900).

Abridged from the *Library Assistant*, December, 1900.

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To discuss how best to increase the usefulness of the L.A.A. one must bear in mind that the true usefulness of such an association can only be judged from the standpoint of the public interest, while one must clearly have in view its avowed objects:—"to promote the social, intellectual, and professional interests of its members."

The promotion of the interests of the L.A.A. is the promotion of the interests of the public—we seek to make library assistants more and more efficient servants of the public. The diffusion of knowledge as to the best methods of work, the comparison of ideas, and the exchange of experiences cannot help but to broaden the minds of all those engaged in similar work, breaking down the narrow-minded bigotry of systems, and the following of grooves, and thus widening general attainment. Even as a cataloguer may avail himself of all the work which has been done in the past by other cataloguers and thus save much individual labour, so by a comparison of methods and experience in all branches of library work time may be saved, to the public gain.

It seems almost impossible to suggest any new feature in connection with the present programme of the L.A.A. The value to the London assistants of a more or less regular attendance at the meetings held in the various library buildings so kindly placed at our disposal is perhaps not as well appreciated as it might be. The great difficulty and expense of travelling to these meetings from the towns adjacent to London, and to the Manchester meetings from the towns adjacent leads to the hope that in time to come will be developed a series of smaller branches, commenced possibly on the lines of a reading circle, such as led to the formation of the Birmingham and District branch of the L.A. Reading circles with a definite object of study are powerful education factors, and with the object of studying for the L.A. examination or some more generally recognised diploma, much useful work might be done. Large branches are of course most useful in developing *esprit de corps* or professional spirit, but a not inconsiderable use may be derived by a scheme on the lines of the University Correspondence Classes, the National Home Reading Union, or the Ruskin Hall Lectures, if some one would find time for this useful and pioneer work of organising the places "where two or three are gathered together."

The journal could easily be extended to double its present size if a larger proportion of the 3,000 library assistants in England joined the L.A.A., and any additional pages added should be devoted exclusively to educational matter. Courses of reading might be suggested, questions asked and model answers given by the co-operation of the lecturers, and summaries of the L.A. Education Committee lectures might well be printed for the benefit of those who cannot attend.

The question of new developments of the work suggests itself, but as in all other voluntary associations the difficulty at once arises of how much the unpaid officers of the association are to sacrifice their scant leisure for the benefit of their colleagues. For those who take no part in the actual work it is comparatively easy to point out flaws in administration, to suggest improvements and changes. But it must never be forgotten how much of the work is done under adverse circumstances, and that it is all voluntary, without fee or reward.

The older, wealthier, and parent Library Association is also a voluntary association, and it has the power by its charter to admit associate members. It does so—but compare for a moment what an associate member of the L.A. gets for his subscription with what a member of the L.A.A. gets!

The great want of the library world is a really live and active associate branch of the Library Association, and the work of the L.A.A. will never be concluded until such is established.

Other professional associations have their associate branches, which are generally powerful educative societies, designed to prepare junior practitioners to pass the professional examination, without having passed which, active membership of the parent association, or of the profession is ultimately impossible.

Librarianship as a profession is as yet too young to know its own ideals and limitations, but we must look forward to the day when it will do so, and prepare for that day. Those who went before us commenced the work, it is our duty to help it on.

#### THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION: A STATEMENT OF ITS USE AND OBJECTS

by GEO. E. ROEBUCK (Hon. Secretary, 1901-6).  
Abridged from the *Library Assistant*, October, 1906.

There can be no doubt that the processes of growth and principles of progress of any institution which claims to be necessary should be as clearly understood as possible—half the difficulties that are met by organisations arise from a lack of understanding on these points by influential outsiders, and our Association has not been distinct from others in this respect. We are on the eve of a new session, a session which has every prospect of an advanced usefulness, and therefore we will endeavour to smooth the path for this term by clearing up some misunderstandings, and by throwing stronger light upon some matters of importance. We will attempt to reveal the L.A.A. as we see it, to explain what we consider it is, what we imagine it has done, and what we hope it may do. If we can make this clear our future course will be the easier.

We consider the L.A.A. to be a body organised for the social betterment and educational improvement of library workers other than chief librarians. We are united in our agreement that library assistantship in this country is capable of much advancement and we set ourselves to the task of working up to a better standard amongst ourselves. We desire to learn from one another rather than to teach. We take a modest opinion of our capabilities, and are constantly urging each other on, meanwhile exhibiting an unselfish desire to extend the beneficial influence we know to exist, to all workers in the same field as ourselves. Our difficulties are great from the fact that outside the large towns the men we would reach are isolated units, hard to get at and harder to quicken to that pitch when a man admits his weaknesses and girds himself for a climb to higher altitudes. We desire to work up a chain of connection and intercourse which shall extend to every library assistant in the United Kingdom, and even to the men in that Britain which lies overseas. Along that

chain we hope to send the constant stimulus to educational and practical improvement, which can only result in a school of librarianship such as Edwards and Bradshaw foresaw. This object of ours is one to which only the meanest souls can take exception, and one which has the double effect to every man who throws in his lot with us, inasmuch as whilst it helps him to help himself it is slowly, but most surely, building up a profession which through the present condition of things is not sufficiently accredited. To advance the professional status is to advance the scope and opportunities of every young man who is to be at the helm of affairs in the future, and that is an undeniable argument which should accord the L.A.A. full measure of justification. By slow degrees we have grown until to-day we represent approximately some 40 per cent. of the junior circle. We are unique in our standing, and since our membership is culled from all quarters of our Empire we may be pardoned if we consider ourselves to be in a position to voice the opinions and watch the interests of the circle of assistantship as a whole. It is to our efforts in this direction that unenrolled men are prone to take umbrage, yet if those men only realised the earnest regard for their interests which the L.A.A. evinces, whether members or not, the troublesome obstructions we meet would not be so readily forthcoming. We are an active body, and did we choose we could close our lists and work hard amongst ourselves to produce a school of men who, by their greater opportunities, would become preference men in a few years. In so doing we should menace the outer ring very seriously, but we prefer to extend to others the privileges we have won for ourselves.

Of our past record we need not say a great deal. We were instituted at the period when the movement for a better class of library workers began to take shape. Fifteen years ago assistantship was not as we find it to-day; generally speaking, the men were not to be compared with the class that is backing the library movement to-day. In many cases the work was not carried out with aim, it was an easy livelihood, and as such had its attractions. The men were but poorly paid, but perhaps they were paid as much as they were worth. They knew few if any of their craft; they seldom aspired to promotion outside their own library. They had no system of practical instruction, and few technical manuals were in existence, such as were being often unknown. We must not forget, however, that librarianship was at this date still in the making. Lucky was the assistant who was being coached for future service prior to 1892. The Library Association having ironed out those broad lines of policy and practice which are the feeding stuffs of the assistant of to-day, turned to the pressing need for a better type of assistant. An examination scheme was formulated, and though it cannot be recorded that this scheme was successful, it must be admitted that it served a good end, if only by reason of the information it yielded as to the condition of the men behind the counter. Besides this it brought the urgency of qualification home to the assistants; there was an awakening to the fact that librarianship meant a life spent in the acquisition of knowledge, and in that awakening the beginnings of real assistantship are to be noted. Almost at once the L.A.A. was founded. Its initiators were men in advanced posts in Metropolitan libraries, who realised the condition of things and determined to work up some means of co-operation amongst library workers for mutual assistance. Their efforts have brought forth good fruit; the L.A.A. has been largely instrumental in bringing about that increased efficiency amongst assistants which is so noticeable nowadays.

Parallel with the growth of the L.A.A. practical instruction emerged

from the ashes of former attempts, and our body played a part in the closing of the entry to untrained men. We protested against the "open door" in justice to those men whom we were urging to qualify. We knew that if the Library Association only gave us time we could send them more candidates than they bargained for, but until we saw that it was to be an examination of a technical character reserved for practical men we could scarcely be blamed for holding our hands. A temporary breach resulted, but, as the years have rolled by, relations have become closer until last year, when they reached high water mark in the invitation to affiliate with which the Library Association honoured us. This invitation was declined because the independence of the L.A.A. was considered essential to its progress and the work it had in view. So we find ourselves to-day. No less than 500 men have passed or are passing through our Association to competency, and this linking up of library workers is to show results before long—even now the working out can be traced.

On the eve of a new Session we wonder what is in store for us? Is this year to outstrip all forerunners, or is that dry rot apathy to creep in and frustrate our enterprise just as we near the pinnacle? It is no idle speculation. Whilst a body is forming, whilst it yet remains in the first stages, there is much hope and scope for personal initiative. All eyes are fixed on that future for which all heads and hands are so hard at work, but as we become more and more established there is a tendency for enthusiasm to flag. Lest this fault shall become too pronounced, let us make an appeal for close interest and continued energy before we speak of work ahead. There will always be a something to strive for, a something to keep our association up to concert pitch. Every generation of assistants will find as much awaiting them as we are faced with to-day; the greater improvement in the standard of assistantship will only mean a greater need for the L.A.A. We cannot afford to slacken speed; before us lies a great work of which as yet we know but the beginnings.

The campaign for extended membership must go on without ceasing, and upon the results of this campaign depends the amount of work we shall be able to perform. Our journal is a good lever in this respect, but to increase the usefulness of that production is impossible so long as we are unable to increase its bulk. This means more expenditure, which means new members. In receiving new members we are reaching a farther field, we are pulling down that approximated 60 per cent. that stands at present as a check to unanimity of object amongst younger British librarians, and we are becoming more in order to speak and act for the whole. If members in the provincial districts would only work up local sections they would be most heartily backed by the main body. These local sections are the future aim of the L.A.A., and until they are formed no true progress outside the larger towns is possible. The existence of present local organisations need be no obstacle—get them amalgamated, linked up in any way which has a trace of promise in it, and extend the benefits we enjoy. So long as a stray provincial assistant is stranded, so long can it be said that the L.A.A. is not doing its work.

The aim of all this enrolment now calls for examination. As has been stated our first care must be for certificated qualification. No society of a practical nature can afford for its members to ignore a standard of proficiency. In order to be of service to our class we have two duties to perform in this connection, viz., to watch the attitude of the Library Association Education Committee, frankly criticising its propaganda, and at the same time to assist ourselves and our fellows to obtain that certification which the Education Committee is instituted to



issue. There can be no two minds as to the result, which will be to clear the difficulties for both examiners and examinees. What is more, we are justified in interesting ourselves in those matters which stand between us and the fields of competency. A further aim rests with the last mentioned. We know as well as our chiefs the second rate position in which librarianship is recognised to-day, and we believe that to raise this can only be accomplished by raising the standard of the men at the wheel. Let there be no mistaken ideas—we are not yet of a stuff that 20th century librarianship demands. It would, however, be foolish to imagine that assistants are yet prepared to back our Association for no more material results; the accomplishment of these objects shows little to the eye, and does not go far to stimulate active interest. The inter-communication must be continuous. More measures need introducing to keep apathy under whilst our elected leaders are moving slowly along the track. Apathy is the great enemy—it arises mainly from a feeling that the general membership has no finger in the administrative pie. There must be more work for these fingers. The greater the membership, the wider the membership, the more need for help, therefore, members who may feel this canker at work in themselves have a remedy waiting at hand. The Executive can make work and can undertake many an enterprise, but no Executive in this world can bring back interest once a member chooses to let it go by the board.

Our Association has now reached a level of recognition at home and abroad; it has a clearer course than ever, and its doings can be looked forward to with interest. It has come to stay, and has much to do. Its success depends not only on a carefully selected Executive, but also on the efforts of every individual member. Measures are occupying the attention of the several Committees which will mean much to the dignity of the calling, the pleasure of the membership, and the progress of the L.A.A. Our social arrangements in the past years have been very happy ones, and we are more encouraged to go ahead in this direction. Our intercourse is extending month by month—overseas as well as in the United Kingdom—and the day seems nearer when we shall have a representative union in each of the colonies of the realm. We have everything to gain by a long prosperity; we and all our class have everything to lose without the L.A.A. Let us work hard, therefore, but above all let us work earnestly.

## REPORTS OF TWO EARLY MEETINGS

### SUMMER PROGRAMME, 1898.

The first item on the Summer Programme, the visit to Hatfield House on June 28th, was favoured with one of the brightest of summer afternoons, and a party of twenty-eight members and friends, including ladies, travelled down from King's Cross, to be met at the gate of Lord Salisbury's mansion by a further five, who formed the cycle contingent of the Association. After an inspection of the artistic and historic treasures of the house, and a pleasant walk in the park, tea was partaken of at the Hatfield Temperance Hotel, presided over by Mrs. B. L. Dyer, Miss Roberts, and Miss Arnott. Photo-



graphs of the party were then taken in Hatfield Park by Mr. Ward, and after a further stroll in the grounds and gardens, the return to town was made, thus concluding a most enjoyable afternoon.

### INAUGURAL MEETING [1903] AT STEPNEY

In spite of the late appearance of the Journal and consequent short notice given, an exceptional number of members and friends gathered to take part in the excellent programme arranged by Mr. Cawthorne on the 7th ultimo. Soon after three o'clock the party were being conducted round certain special portions of His Majesty's Tower by a jovial and portly warder, who apparently had English History, at any rate so far as the Tower was concerned, at his finger-tips. The ordinary sights, such as the Regalia, were not inspected, but the generally reserved portions, *i.e.*, the Dungeon, the Armoury and the St. Peter's Church, were viewed with much interest. From the Tower, the party wended its way, *via* the Mincies, to the Whitechapel Art Gallery, where an instructive exhibition of ships and shipping was seen under the guidance of the Director.

The museum was next visited and its aims and working explained by the Curator, Miss Hall. Probably this is one of the most practical and useful museums in existence. From here the party proceeded to Toynbee Hall, and was received in the Drawing Room by Canon Barnett, the Warden. The Canon gave a few warm words of welcome, in the course of which he said this place, Toynbee Hall, has been existing now for the last twenty years; it was a sort of college, club, and centre of education. Every man who lived in the house took part in some one or other of the sections of work connected with the Hall. It is the object of all who teach to come into personal contact, as far as possible, with the learner, and it is thought that better results are gained thereby. Librarians are educationalists, and under the new Act they would realise this more and more. He envied the youth of those present for the opportunities they would have as educationalists. All that had been done was not what might have been done, and what remained to be done in the future must be largely accomplished by the librarian. He believed in personally conducted tours in Bookland by librarians. He urged the fostering of humanities which must make men realise that each individual was one of a great association, and not a separate unit to live for himself alone. In conclusion, he bid the Library Assistants' Association heartily welcome.

Tea was next served in the Lecture Hall, to which fifty members and friends sat down. After tea, Mr. Cawthorne, seconded by Mr. Rees, voiced the thanks of the Association to the Canon for his welcome and hospitality. This was acknowledged by the Under-Warden, Mr. Beveridge.

Under the guidance of Mr. Councillor Douglas, one of the residents, the Dining Room, Library, Lawn Tennis Grounds, Men's Apartments and Invalid School were visited and items of interest connected with each were dwelt upon. Finally, Mr. Douglas gave a short sketch of the history of the settlement.

Shortly afterwards, the party bid adieu to Toynbee Hall, carrying away many pleasant recollections, and proceeded to the St. George's Library, Cable Street. Here several other members joined, and it was a full room that Mr. F. C. Mills, Chairman of the Stepney Libraries Committee, presided over. The Chairman addressed a few warm words of welcome, and briefly commented on the success of the Stepney Libraries, which he said was due in no small degree to their excellent librarian and his staff. Mr. Cawthorne then gave an address on "Recent Adverse Criticism of Municipal Libraries," which, together with the discussion, appears elsewhere in this number.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Cawthorne was moved by Mr. Vellenoweth, seconded by Mr. Thorne, and a similar vote, proposed by Mr. Rees, seconded by Mr. Hatcher, was accorded to the Chairman. This terminated one of the most successful, enjoyable and instructive inaugural meetings ever arranged.

ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS  
(Section of the Library Association)

## 59th ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1954

AFTER THE eventful post-war years and a financial crisis, the Council of the Association was concerned in 1954, in the main, with planning for the future. This planning covered not only a routine consideration of the general rules and of rules of procedure, but culminated in a decision to appoint a special committee to clarify the basic and distinctive policy of the Association, and to consider methods for the adequate publicising of that policy and for its effective implementation: not a decision lightly to be reached by a body allegedly trembling on the brink of absorption, dissolution, or some synonym of *hari kiri*.

Nevertheless, one current problem remains constantly before the Council—that of posts advertised at inadequate salaries. The greatest satisfaction that the Council can feel is that the number of applicants for the last post so advertised was very, very small, and, it is to be hoped, one step nearer the complete support which members of the Association must give if any improvement is to be assured.

An innovation was the holding of a Presidential Induction in the President's home Division in place of the Inaugural Lecture previously held in London. The success of this experiment at Liverpool suggests that it may well become a permanent feature of the Association's year.

The fifth Annual Conference was held at Nottingham and the Council is grateful to the leaders—Messrs. D. I. Colley, F.L.A., S. C. Holliday, F.L.A., and W. S. Hudson, F.L.A. Under the title (not unknown to the Association) of *The reader and the bookish manner*, those present discussed the service to readers in libraries of all kinds. The Council is grateful to those local authorities and librarians who, together with the Conference secretary, Miss L. E. Green, A.L.A., of Nottinghamshire County Library, made essential contributions to the Conference's success.

The Annual General Meeting, which has been reported in the *Assistant Librarian*, was held in Chaucer House on May 20th, and must have been one of the liveliest meetings held in that building. The preliminary notice announced that after the business meeting, Mr. O'Leary, "one of the most stimulating, witty and forthright speakers in the profession," had been invited to speak and expected "his talk to provide a fitting climax to a memorable day." We were not disappointed.

The Annual General Meeting decided to increase Divisional representation for "Divisions" (at the moment this means the G.L.D.) with a membership exceeding 750; agreed to consider what impetus could be given to original research; instructed the Council to consider a revision of the rules governing the issue of correspondence courses; but refused to suggest continuing the distribution of the *Assistant Librarian* to defaulting members. During the remainder of the year the Council began work on those items requiring a report to the next Annual General Meeting.

There were five Council meetings during the year. The following attendances were recorded:—

J. S. Parsonage, F.L.A. (President) 5; J. S. Bristow, F.L.A. (Vice-President) 5; C. W. Taylor, F.L.A. (Past President) 5; A. Ll. Carver, F.L.A. 5; Miss B. C. Clark, F.L.A. 5; W. Howard Phillips, F.L.A. 5; H. Smith, F.L.A. 5; O. S. Tomlinson, F.L.A. 5; Miss E. J. Willson, F.L.A. 5 (National Councillors); Miss G. E. C. Edwards, A.L.A. (Bristol)

4; G. E. Thompson, F.L.A. (Bristol) 1; W. A. Smith, F.L.A. (Devon and Cornwall) 5; F. Bale, F.L.A. (Eastern) 2; J. W. Hunt (Eastern) 1; Miss E. M. Jahn, F.L.A. (East Midland) 3; P. J. Cox, F.L.A. (East Midland) 1; J. N. Taylor, A.L.A. (East Midland) 1; D. L. Brown, F.L.A. (East Midland) 1; E. E. Moon, F.L.A. (G.L.D.) 5; W. G. Smith, A.L.A. (G.L.D.) 5; R. G. Surrage, F.L.A. (G.L.D.) 4; H. R. Klieneberger, M.A., A.L.A. (G.L.D.) 1; R. Brown, F.L.A. (Kent) 4; A. H. Watkins, F.L.A. (Kent) 1; S. J. Brett, A.L.A. (Liverpool) 5; Miss E. K. Wilson, F.L.A. (Liverpool) 3; J. Brown, F.L.A. (Liverpool) 1; P. C. Gerrard, A.L.A. (Liverpool) 1; J. Sankey, F.L.A. (Manchester) 4; P. Sykes, F.L.A. (Manchester) 4; Miss A. H. Higgs, A.L.A. (Midland) 5; Miss E. Jerram, A.L.A. (Midland) 4; E. F. Ferry, F.L.A. (North Eastern) 3, succeeded by C. Muris, M.A., A.L.A. 2; N. Willox, A.L.A. (North Eastern) 5; R. I. J. Tully, F.L.A. (North Wales) 3; Miss M. R. Roberts (North Wales) 1; C. F. Shepherd, A.L.A. (South Wales) 5; J. N. Harris, F.L.A. (Sussex) 4; H. G. Holloway, A.L.A. (Sussex) 1; J. N. Stebbing, A.L.A. (Wessex) 5; P. Colehan, F.L.A. (Yorkshire) 5; A. B. Craven, F.L.A. (Yorkshire) 5; W. S. Hudson, F.L.A. (Honorary Treasurer) 5; A. C. Jones, F.L.A. (Honorary Editor) 5; Mrs. L. Martin (Honorary Education Secretary) 5; W. F. Broome, F. L. A. (Honorary Membership Secretary) 4; T. Mann, F.L.A. (Honorary Publications Officer) 5; W. Tynemouth, F.L.A. (Honorary Secretary) 5.

Through its representation on the Council and Committees, the Association of Assistant Librarians has continued to be actively represented in the work of the Library Association.

#### PUBLICATIONS.

It was reported last year that we had reached the climax of the first post-war publishing programme. This year has seen its virtual completion with the publication of *A primer of bibliography* by K. A. Mallaber, which was then in the press, and the launching of a further ambitious programme intended to fill some of the remaining gaps in our professional literature. Among the proposed new publications about which preliminary discussions have been held during the year are Primers of library bookbinding, "non-book" materials, library planning and building techniques, and library co-operation, an Introduction to county library practice and a Costume Index. Not all of these will necessarily see publication—plans for a Primer of work with young people have had to be abandoned for the time being because of the difficulty of finding a suitable author—but the selection of possible authors, the examination of manuscripts submitted and the continual review of the list of desirable publications in the light of suggestions received from Divisions and individual members are matters which constantly engage the attention of the Press and Publications Committee.

In addition to these new publications, a number of reprints and new editions have been put in hand, including a new edition of Phillips' *Primer of book classification*, a revised reprint of Hewitt's *Summary of public library law*, a fourth impression of the *Fiction index*, and the long-awaited new edition of *Sequels*. Revision of both volumes of the *A.A.L. Guide* was well in hand at the end of the year; new "pamphlet" guides to Final part 1 and Final parts 2 and 2a had already been published, and guides to the Registration Examination and Final parts 2 and 2b, together with a general introduction to the examinations, were in the press. The Association is greatly indebted to Dr. A. J. Walford, General Editor of the *A.A.L. Guides*, whose enthusiastic co-operation has enabled us to make such good progress with the revision of this series during the

year. The 1949 *Catalogue of the A.A.L. Library*, being now out of date, was withdrawn from the list of current publications.

The continued success of the *Assistant Librarian* in "providing a platform for the full and free discussion of professional and related matters" persuaded the Council to provide increased financial support for 1954, with the result that volume 47 contains 188 text pages and two large supplements of comment on the L.A. Examinations. The Council's action was well supported by contributors, and although 31 original articles (against 15 in 1953) and 44 letters were published, the Hon. Editor found it necessary to decline a larger proportion of the contributions received than ever before—certain evidence of the continued good health of our journal.

#### EDUCATION.

In 1954 a total of 1,320 correspondence courses were arranged, covering eighteen sections of the Syllabus. Of this total, 353 were short revision courses for students taking an examination again. An increased number of applications came from students overseas: 75 during the year.

In response to continued requests, arrangements were put in hand for two additional courses to cover Modern Literature and the Literature and Librarianship of the Social Sciences in Part 3 of the Final Examination.

This growth, both in the number of students and in courses offered, brings additional problems, and the Education Committee considered that the time was opportune to reconsider the whole question of policy and the future administration of correspondence courses, which were first organised on their present basis in 1931. Consequently, the Council appointed a sub-committee to investigate thoroughly and report.

The Council once again takes this annual opportunity of thanking those members of the profession who, by their willing service and co-operation, help to meet the demand for courses. It was a pleasure to welcome the following members to the panel during 1954:—E. T. Bryant, F.L.A., W. E. G. Critchley, F.L.A., J. W. Carter, F.L.A., L. F. Hasker, F.L.A., E. A. Willatts, F.L.A., and Miss J. M. Peterson, M.A., F.L.A.

Resignations were received with regret from:—E. V. Corbett, F.L.A., K. G. Hunt, B.A., F.L.A. (Editor), A. Joyce, F.L.A., A. R. Williams, F.L.A., and Miss B. Ramsbotham, F.L.A.

Mr. D. C. Henrik Jones, F.L.A., Librarian and Information Officer of the Library Association, reports that of the total number of 7,716 issues from the library at Chaucer House, 2,532 were from the A.A.L. Library section. The total number of books added to stock was 926, and of these 100 were added to the stock of the A.A.L. section, which now represents 2,053 of the complete stock of the library.

#### MEMBERSHIP.

The membership of the Section decreased very slightly during the year to 6,637, which is distributed among the Divisions as under:—

Bristol	..	188	North Wales	..	39
Devon and Cornwall	..	116	South Wales	..	199
Eastern	..	124	Sussex	..	124
East Midland	..	364	Wessex	..	181
Greater London	..	2,065	Yorkshire	..	464
Kent	..	186	Schools	..	209
Liverpool	..	449	Central	..	440
Manchester	..	530			
Midland	..	550			
North Eastern	..	409			
			Total	..	6,637

The comparative figures of membership over the past five years are:—

1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
5,615	5,660	6,162	6,490	6,643

Members of the Association are to be found in nearly all countries of the world.

A check on optings was made in June/July, 1954, and the number who had opted by July 1st, and who were therefore eligible to vote, was 5,941.

The distribution of *The Assistant Librarian*, which circulates throughout the world news and views of British Librarians, reached the record figure of 7,750 in August, 1954. A glance at the mailing list shows that our Journal is despatched to readers in Achimota, Auckland, Bangkok, Boolaroo, Boston, Mass., Brussels, Budapest, Budejovice, Calcutta, Cape Town, Chicago, Colombo, Copenhagen, Florida, Gothenburg, Grenada, The Hague, Hyderabad, Ibadan, Invercargill, Jerusalem, Khartoum, Leipzig, Leningrad, Louisiana, Malmö, Melbourne, Mississippi, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Orebro, Ostend, Patna, Potchefstroom, Prague, Rangoon, Rio de Janeiro, Sacramento, St. John's, San Antonio, Singapore, Tasmania, Toorak, Toronto, Trinidad, Vatican City, Zagreb . . . and many more.

#### THE FUTURE.

The future of the A.A.L. has probably been discussed more during the past year than at any other time since 1939, and at least one prophet from another place has forecast for it an early and painless death because it has ceased to have any *raison d'être*. Our achievements in recent years should effectively disprove this, and although our immediate objectives and means of attaining them may change with changing needs and conditions, our fundamental purpose—the welfare of the assistant in every type of library—has not altered for sixty years, and our present existence is well justified.

There is, however, still much to be accomplished, and our successes should not lead to complacency, nor confidence in our future to apathy—for the continuing prosperity of the Association depends upon the active support and participation of the membership as a whole, and particularly of the younger assistants from whom the leaders of to-morrow will be chosen. Whilst it is fitting that on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee the Council should decide to clarify and republish the aims and ambitions of the A.A.L., these can only be realised with the full co-operation and support of a vigorous membership, for without this the gloomy prophecy noted earlier might well be fulfilled.

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#### OFFICERS OF THE A.A.L., 1955

PRESIDENT: J. S. Bristow, F.L.A., Central Library, Croydon.

VICE-PRESIDENT: W. Tynemouth, F.L.A., Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne.

HON. SECRETARY: E. E. Moon, F.L.A., Central Library, Chiswick, W.4.

HON. TREASURER: W. S. Hudson, F.L.A., Central Library, Kensington, W.8.

HON. EDITOR: A. C. Jones, F.L.A., Central Library, Hornsey, N.8.

HON. SOLICITORS: Messrs. Metcalfe, Copeman & Pettefar,  
3 and 4, Clement's Inn, W.C.2.

#### OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

PUBLICATIONS: T. Mann, F.L.A., Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne.

EDUCATION: Mrs. L. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24.

MEMBERSHIP: W. F. Broome, F.L.A., Central Library, Lambeth, S.W.2.

# ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library Association)

## STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

1st January to 31st December, 1954

### GENERAL ACCOUNT.

Income.		Expenditure.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To :—		By :—	
Balance brought forward		Distributing "Assistant Librarian" ...	230 10 4
from 1953 ...	589 14 7	Payments to Divisions ...	573 12 6
Capitation grants ...	2,087 7 0	Councillors' expenses ...	521 11 9
Subscriptions ...	2 10 0	Film, "Resources discovered" ...	61 3 3
Stationery ...	3 8 6	Library (to L.A.) ...	110 0 0
Conference ...	224 0 2	Stationery ...	60 16 2
Index to Progress:—		Conference ...	234 12 9
Sales ...	25 4 0	Postage ...	29 1 7
Rentals ...	6 13 6	Clerical expenses ...	85 15 0
Miscellaneous ...	5 7 7	Presidential induction ...	8 14 3
		Annual General Meeting ...	9 18 2
		Election expenses ...	34 19 11
		Miscellaneous ...	3 0 0
			1,963 15 8
		Balance crd. fwd. to 1955	980 9 8
			£2,944 5 4
	£2,944 5 4		

### CORRESPONDENCE COURSES ACCOUNT.

Income.		Expenditure.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To :—		By :—	
Balance brought forward		Tutors' expenses ...	2,397 2 6
from 1953 ...	292 15 5	Hon. Educ. Secretary's Expenses ...	100 0 0
Students' fees ...	3,197 0 0	Postage ...	60 0 0
Sale of notebooks ...	7 4 9	Stationery ...	249 14 7
Refund of tutor's expenses ...	10 10 0	Refund of fees ...	10 10 0
		Standard courses:—	
		Compiling ...	9 9 0
		Editing ...	25 2 0
		Duplicating ...	249 19 1
		Collating ...	10 19 0
		Miscellaneous ...	3 15 0
			3,116 11 2
		Balance crd. fwd. to 1955	390 19 0
	£3,507 10 2		£3,507 10 2

### PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT.

Income.		Expenditure.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To :—		By :—	
Balance brought forward		Stationery ... ..	43 19 6
from 1953 ... ..	684 6 9	Royalties ... ..	337 2 5
Sales ... ..	2,256 4 1	Distribution ... ..	23 2 6
"Assistant Librarian" ...	200 0 1	Postages ... ..	80 0 0
Advertising ... ..	292 13 0	Insurance ... ..	4 8 3
		Printing: Cotton and	
		Glencross ... ..	210 0 0
		Binns ... ..	437 13 2
		Walford (2 parts) ...	117 12 3
		Miscellaneous ... ..	7 6 2
		Printing "Assistant Librarian" ... ..	1,117 6 9
		Clerical expenses ... ..	12 12 0
		Miscellaneous ... ..	8 9 3
			<hr/>
			2,399 12 3
		Balance crd. fwd. to 1955	1,033 11 8
			<hr/>
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£3,433 3 11		£3,433 3 11
	<hr/>		<hr/>

### BENEVOLENT FUND ACCOUNT.

Income.		Expenditure.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To :—		By :—	
Balance brought forward			
from 1953 ... ..	427 17 7	Balance crd. fwd. to 1955	439 13 0
Under credit interest, 1953	2 0		
Interest on P.O.S.B. A/c.	3 10		
Appreciation in value of			
N.S. Certs. ... ..	11 9 7		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£439 13 0		£439 13 0
	<hr/>		<hr/>

### STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS ON 31ST DECEMBER, 1954.

Assets.		Liabilities.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To :—		By :—	
N.S. Certs. value at		Balance of fund on	
31/12/54 ... ..	431 15 2	31/12/54 ... ..	439 13 0
P.O.S.B. A/c. ... ..	7 17 10		<hr/>
	<hr/>		£439 13 0
	£439 13 0		<hr/>
	<hr/>		<hr/>

All the above statements audited and found correct.

(Signed) R. J. ENSING

W. S. HUDSON, *Hon. Treasurer.*

M. WILDEN-HART

*Hon. Auditors.*

ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS  
(Section of the Library Association)

## 60th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THIS YEAR the Annual General Meeting is being combined with the Presidential Induction and Address, and will take place at Chaucer House. A theatre visit and tea are being arranged for the afternoon.

### AGENDA.

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1. Minutes of the previous meeting, held in Chaucer House, London, W.C.1, on Thursday, May 20th, 1954.
  2. To receive the Annual Report of the Council, including the Annual Report of the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Auditors for the year ended 31st December, 1954.
  3. To nominate and elect two Honorary Auditors, who, in accordance with Rule 5(c), may not be members of the Council.
  4. To consider the following motion submitted by P. D. Pocklington and H. D. Westacott:—

“That the rules governing the election of National Councillors be amended, and a clause be inserted to ensure that of the six councillors elected annually, at least three *must* be under 30 years of age.”
  5. Any other business.
- 

The full programme is:—

- 2.30 Party to the Haymarket Theatre to see Thornton Wilder's play, “The Matchmaker.”
- 5.00 High tea at Lyons' Corner House, Coventry Street.
- 6.30 Chaucer House: Presidential Induction.
- 6.45 Annual General Meeting. (Agenda below).
- 7.15 Presidential Address by Mr. J. S. Bristow, F.L.A.

Sixty seats have been booked at the Haymarket and the combined cost of theatre and tea is 10s.

Members wishing to take part in the afternoon's programme should forward 10s. to MR. A. BILL, MARK HALL BRANCH LIBRARY, THE STOW, HARLOW, ESSEX, *before* April 15th. Members wishing to forward a booking fee of 2s. 6d. (not returnable) and the rest later may do so, provided that the balance is received before April 15th.

Mr. Bill will also be glad to hear from any provincial members who would like overnight accommodation either before or after the meeting.



## THE FUTURE OF THE A.A.L.

*[The following invited contributions are intended only as a beginning to the discussion of this vital question. It will be noticed that they come mostly from senior members of our Association (Yes, even Mr. Hutchings is a member!) and we hope that younger assistants will now accept a general invitation to come forward with their comments and suggestions. Our columns are wide open for further discussion, and every attempt will be made to find room for all worthwhile letters received. Please be as brief as possible—and it always helps greatly if letters are typed and double-spaced.—Hon. Ed.].*

### F. G. B. HUTCHINGS

*(City Librarian, Leeds; Hon. Treasurer, Library Association).*

A SOCIETY is usually established for some purpose: it endures so long as the purpose endures. Once that disappears the society begins to fade; too often, however, life lingers on supported by artificial aids and recollections of causes fought and won. The Association of Assistant Librarians was formed to unite assistants and promote their interests at a time when chief librarians were joined together in the Library Association. One can sense from the past the stuffed-shirt superiority of the one and the down-at-heel optimism of the other. Now we are all down-at-heel and superiority declines with age. The venerable used to assume frock coat and beard: the frock coat has given way to Edwardian affectation and the beard has become the prerogative of the young.

The extension of the Library Association to include all library assistants who wished to qualify as librarians was a constitutional change set in a changing social environment; that is, it could not have happened without circumstances being present to encourage it. The First World War gave a rude shock to the old order of the ruled and the ruler. There was an almost painful belief in the new world, housing schemes were heralded as "homes fit for heroes to live in," it was a time of intense gaiety and good fellowship, optimism and change were in the air. Why, there was even a new library act, and a departmental committee of the then Board of Education on public libraries. If the promise had to be fulfilled, then there had, amongst other things, to be a stronger Association and more librarians. The C.U.K.T., a measure of self-help, and the extension of the membership made Chaucer House possible; but the extension of membership, almost by compulsion, also meant extending the vote to the young who, being more numerous, found themselves with the power. Here indeed is an example of the so-called "forward march" of democracy. In the early years of the change it was inevitable that there should be tension; the elders had not adjusted themselves to substituting persuasion for authority, their methods promoted the arrogance of the enfranchised young. There were conflicts, the council of the elders was defeated more than once; but now, it seems to me, these are matters which belong to the past: the adjustments have been made and the marriage of convenience has become something of a success. Moreover it has produced a progeny.

It is a functional progeny in the form of branches and sections of the Library Association. Each part of the country now has its branch; the sections are developing on an area basis. Librarians are no longer divided into the "haves" and "have-nots"; but are linked together by an over-riding professionalism which takes note of location and special

interests. What place is there now for the Association of Assistant Librarians? If there is a place I find it difficult to discover. Little of the work it now does is distinctive (although it may be distinguished). It has a publications programme, and very good it is; but it is not clearly distinct from the Library Association programme. It produces *The Assistant Librarian* which represents the young idea and does it very well—particularly well of late—but if the change in periodical publication before the Library Association Council comes about, wholly or in part, it will be difficult to find a justification for *The Assistant Librarian*. It runs correspondence courses (and there is still a place for them); but these could, presumably, be run by the Library Association, not to mention the fact that the full-time schools have altered greatly the whole outlook on tuition. It provides a "ginger group" for the Library Association. Now this is important on the assumption that it is necessary; but it has been my experience in recent years that the need has been declining as the Library Association Council has broadened the basis of its representation.

Having said all this I do not propose to enter upon suggestions as to the form the obsequies should take; indeed, I have been at pains to show that time will bring about change without external encouragement. More than this, I am persuaded that the less external encouragement there is, the more rapid will be the decline; nothing gives a greater stimulus to life than the threat of sudden death.. All I ask is that the body should not be kept alive unduly by artificial aids, and that when the time comes we may all mourn a friend who has not lingered beyond sufferance.

One last word. I believe the task of the future is to unite the diverse elements which constitute the library profession, and in that unity to carry our experience and strength beyond the shores of this country. There is a new world struggling to be born in which librarians have a part to play; I hope they will not fail by being absorbed and obsessed in maintaining differences which have lost their relevance.

#### W. TYNEMOUTH

(Deputy Librarian, Newcastle upon Tyne, Vice-President, A.A.L.).

IT IS AN HONOUR to be able to contribute something to our jubilee. The next event of importance will, I suppose, be the centenary, and having already been described as one of the A.A.L.'s "old men," the honour must be accepted now.

When the centenary does come I wonder if there will still be someone in the Library Association (which will not then be 100) saying that the A.A.L. is "superfluous" or "an anomaly" and planning from one step behind what they will do when they are one step in front.

One of the saddest features of the present British way of life is the rash of societies for the prevention of this, that, and the other, which collectively form a milk-and-water variation of "1984." This negative view of life has even spread to some of our churches, so that they would rather prevent a hundred people from visiting a cinema on Sunday than they would direct the same energy to adding a single additional member to a congregation.

It is, therefore, not surprising that certain negative minds in the Library Association are reviving an attempt to exterminate the A.A.L. There are some "positivists" who believe that the Library Association can so far develop and increase the opportunities of its members to share in its many interests that the A.A.L. will become superfluous. But these individuals are few—and the day is not yet at hand.

Indeed, the greatest volume of sound appears to come from those with allegedly tidy minds who object to the simultaneous vertical and horizontal classification of the Library Association. In one such discussion a member was heard to tell his audience that the co-ordinate classes of the Library Association should be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, that is to say, co-extensive with the *summmum genus*. That esoteric tosh is presumably lifted from Phillips's treatise on the rag trade, and is possibly all right when applied to the theory of classification; but we have in the British Constitution, as opposed to the French, a proof that organizations do not work the better for being theoretically logical.

The A.A.L. provides an opportunity for service in its Divisional organizations and in its correspondence courses for those who have benefited in the past to repay their debts in the future. It provides opportunities for professional activity which the L.A. has copied by making its branch coverage national—without, it should be noticed, impairing the divisional activity of the A.A.L.

One of the criticisms I have recently heard voiced about the A.A.L. is that it is living on its past glories. Even its sternest critics admit to these past glories, and there are those who admit that the A.A.L. has achieved success in several directions within the immediate past. Apart from such accomplished facts as the Tighe Report, *Index to Progress*, and several of its publications, the A.A.L. has contributed much to such awareness and activity as exists in purely professional matters, as well as in the realm of professional politics.

This rôle of a ginger-group is not confined to prodding the L.A. on grading, conditions of service, the Association finances and the hours of opening of the Chaucer House Library, but in nearly all Divisions extends to an awakening of interest and practical work on the things that matter in librarianship.

In the fields of education and publications the A.A.L. has long played an important part. "The Martins" have made an immense contribution; but I am sure they would be the first to acknowledge the parts played by others, putting back something of the benefit they had earlier drawn.

The importance of the opportunities given by the A.A.L.'s divisional organization for practice in public speaking, committee work, holding office, and representing the points of view of others can not be over-estimated. The value goes far beyond that: those are only the obvious points; most important is the exchange of ideas and comradeship with professional colleagues in other libraries, often other *types* of libraries.

Does the A.A.L. duplicate the L.A.? This is a question often asked, and as both have conferences, regional organizations and publications, is perhaps an obvious point to raise. Surely, however, the L.A. conference, its Branch meetings and the *Record* should be concerned with professional matters at the highest possible level.

Chartered librarians should, however, continue to attend A.A.L. divisional meetings in order to contribute, without dominating, for the benefit of those between G.C.E. and A.P.T.—with the devil and the deep blue sea thrown in each June and December.

Beginning as I did in a small library, I know the value divisional meetings, correspondence courses and the *Assistant* were to me. I could name those who helped and influenced me, but I feel sure they would be more satisfied if I in my turn were to hand on the torch.

For those who are interested in the past, the files of the *Assistant Librarian* and its predecessor in title, together with our annual reports, will provide adequate grounds for research. Personally, I am only inter-

ested in the future and the responsibility of that must pass increasingly to the generations which are following. But let me in advance answer the criticisms which are bound to be made of the number of "old men" in the A.A.L. This presumably refers to those of us who are but little more than half-way on the road to our portrait by Graham Sutherland. Perhaps those who make this criticism forget that six years disappeared from our professional lives and that the number of us was unhappily reduced. This partial gap is now being bridged, but it should be remembered that there is no age limit for those who wish to put something into the A.A.L.

MISS E. J. WILLSON

(*Chief Assistant, Hammersmith P.L.; A.A.L. National Councillor.*)

RECENTLY there has been criticism of the A.A.L. Mr. Hutchings, for example, thinks it has outgrown its usefulness; criticism from such a source cannot be ignored and may be of real value if those who disagree are led to think about the A.A.L. as it is and as it ought to be, during its jubilee year, instead of using the occasion for a review of past achievements and for mutual congratulation.

What does the A.A.L. do to justify its existence and capitation (at the 1929 level) from the Library Association? It runs correspondence courses—but others could do this even if they could not do it so cheaply nor afford to organize economically unprofitable courses simply because one or two students need them. The A.A.L. issues a monthly journal which pays particular attention to the needs of students and is read all over the world; on the other hand if the *Assistant Librarian* ceased publication, some of its liveliness might leaven other journals. The A.A.L. commissions and publishes textbooks; other bodies do this, although not so cheaply. The A.A.L. has a Benevolent Fund and owns the "Students' Library" now administered by the Librarian of the Library Association. It organizes an annual conference which is different, in that not only is it held in a place which has libraries worth visiting, but no important people attend and everyone takes part in the discussions. These services are valuable, but if the A.A.L. ceased to provide them it would still have much of unique value to offer.

Firstly it is the only professional body which covers the whole country, includes workers from all types of library and excludes employers from membership and chief librarians from office. It is therefore able to put forward the viewpoint of younger people, to be more frank in its criticisms and regard each problem with some measure of detachment.

Secondly it provides an alternative to official policy. Without prating in the fashionable way about democracy, it can be recognised that it is of utmost value for the library profession to have such a body which is part of the official organization yet with a tradition of independence of its own. However reformed the Council of the Library Association becomes, it is hardly likely to reach such a state of perfection that criticism is no longer needed. No one can measure the debt a household owes to its watchdog until the watchdog is no longer there. There is always a tendency for precautionary measures which succeed to appear unnecessary. I think that if the A.A.L. did not exist it would be necessary to invent one.

Thirdly the A.A.L. provides a training ground in Committee work, organization and public speaking. It could be argued that even if Divisions did no useful work in arranging professional and social meetings

and visits, providing revision schools, publishing newsheets and surveys and all the other important work they do, the training they give their members alone would justify their existence. There may be some areas where, at a particular time, the Branch seems to provide all the training needed, but such occasions are isolated. In a Branch such as the London and Home Counties a high proportion of the elected members of its committee are, very properly, chief librarians who remain on it for years; in such an area very few assistants would have the chance of gaining committee experience if they had to rely on the Branch. That the A.A.L. has been a great training ground even its sternest critics do not deny, and there seems no reason to doubt that it will continue to be so, even if some of those who have profited by its training themselves are ready to deny it to their successors.

That the youngest members of the profession are not often found on the A.A.L. Council or even on the Committees of its Divisions is sometimes regarded as a proof that the A.A.L. has lost its appeal to assistants. When you consider, however, the examinations for which a young assistant has to study to-day and compare them with those for which the previous generation sat and remember that the generation before was mostly spared them altogether, the wonder is not that so few, but that so many, are willing to jeopardize their future by working for the A.A.L. before they are fully qualified. The days when we left school at fourteen and were chief librarians at twenty-four belong to the past.

How should the A.A.L. develop in the future? Obviously it must continue the work I have already mentioned, but at the present time it has an opportunity to serve the profession which, if ignored, may not occur again. Few things are more important in a small profession like ours than unity—the more groups splinter away the greater is the danger that we shall be disregarded to the detriment of our work. I believe that the future policy of the A.A.L. should be an active one to unite all workers in libraries. The things we have in common are so much greater than our differences. The greatest advances of post-war librarianship are the development of specialization and co-operation. We find public libraries, other than those of the great cities, appointing specialists such as music librarians and archivists and even the smallest library has learnt that it can increase its usefulness to its own community, as well as to the world at large, by some measure of specialization. Many schemes of co-operation between different types of library have come into being (*Scotapll* and *Cicris*, for example), but we still have insufficient co-operation between assistants from different types of library. At present the majority of members of the Library Association come from rate-supported libraries, the 10 per cent. who do not are obliged to be on the defensive and urge the case for special librarians in season and out while public librarians are amused or resentful. Greater specialization and opportunities for co-operation lie in the future, and common sense would seem to indicate that the sooner special librarians, who now feel themselves to be outside the main stream, become part of it, the better for us all. The A.A.L. should give non-public librarians a place on its Council and encourage Divisions, especially in areas where the specialist sections are unable to form local organizations, to bring such members on to their Committees by co-option. The Greater London Division made this its policy some time ago and now three or four members from non-public libraries get elected each year and make valuable contributions to its work. We have nothing to fear and much to gain from the mixing of assistants from all types of library. The assistant from a special library

often works on a small staff and has a greater need of the A.A.L. than the public library assistant who may belong to a staff guild and has N.A.L.G.O. round the corner. The A.A.L. has done much to improve the lot of the public library assistant; at present the G.L.D. is investigating conditions in non-public libraries. This is a beginning.

Another major problem to the solution of which the A.A.L. can make a valuable contribution is that of staff recruitment and staff relationships. The A.A.L. might make a film to introduce the profession to young people leaving school; it might collect facts on why those who enter librarianship do so as well as why they leave; it might draw up a plan to fit graduates into public library staffs without friction and decide on a practicable division of duties into professional and non-professional. On such problems there is much the A.A.L. can do because it does not represent those in authority.

I do not see the A.A.L. of the future as a trades union or returning to a perilous, and possibly penurious, independence, but I do see it as a vital force in the creation of a united profession, and in the training of the librarians of the future—and as a force which, because of the contribution it makes, will continue to earn the right to criticise.

R. 'J. HOY

(Deputy Librarian, School of Oriental and African Studies).

THERE MAY BE some psychological explanation for the A.A.L.'s pre-occupation with its own future—perhaps a feeling of insecurity is indicated. Whatever the reason may be, the subject has repeatedly cropped up in recent years. In the *Assistant Librarian* of October, 1951, Mr. Sharr made a weighty defence of the A.A.L.; it seemed to me that some of his arguments were suspect, and I attempted a reply in the issue of December of the same year. Since these two contributions are available in print, no useful purpose is served by going over the whole of the ground again except to pick out some points of especial importance.

One point to which the A.A.L. might well devote attention is whether it is in accordance with present conditions and future trends to have an association devoted exclusively to the interests of assistants—presumably as against those of chief librarians. Even as recently as before the war there might have been some substance in this antiposition of chiefs and the rest, but, to maintain the attitude now displays what seems to me to be ignorance of the facts of life. My own experience suggests that in the larger staffs, at least, the interests of the seniors tend to approximate more closely to those of the chiefs than to those of the juniors. Furthermore, the large body of special libraries which have come into prominence since the war are often organised with small staffs, in which the chief does many jobs done by assistants elsewhere. Such people could make a notable contribution to the work of the A.A.L., but presumably they are excluded, at least from office, by the Association's terms of reference.

In fact, the Association does tacitly recognise the impossibility of catering substantially for *all* non-chiefs; its activities tend to canalise themselves into two main streams, as I have indicated below.

I have argued elsewhere that we might have seen a Municipal Libraries Section in existence long since but for the fact that the municipal librarians "captured" the Branch committees; the Branches have thus served in many ways as a substitute for a Municipal Libraries Sec-

tion. I would add that a contributory factor has been the existence of the A.A.L., to which the younger municipal librarians would adhere and make their mark. A general result of all this has been a distortion of the L.A., which has become increasingly clear as more and more non-municipal sections have been formed. The A.A.L. claims to be representative of all types of librarian, and when accused of public library bias the reply is usually that the non-public librarians do not take the opportunities open to them to pull their weight in Association affairs. So long as election to committees goes by simple majority, special librarians, except, perhaps, in London, find it difficult, if not impossible, to get elected. But even when they are interested and would like to help they are confronted with the fact that when, for instance, any part of the Association holds a meeting on "books" or "authors," those selected are invariably literary ones; I have yet to see an announcement of an A.A.L. meeting dealing with non-literary books or authors. In other words, the A.A.L. looks like a public library body; its impact on people is that of a public library body; and to the assistant who is not old in membership of the L.A., these are the things which count and which influence action. I suggest, therefore, that another point to which those responsible for the future of the A.A.L. should devote themselves is the organisation of a constitution which will make that body demonstrably all-embracing and of interest to every type of librarian.

My own impression is that juniors do not play the part in the affairs of the special sections which they might. No doubt the reasons are varied, and cannot all be dealt with by the A.A.L. One reason which I have heard is that the special sections are relatively small, and they tend to be run by the senior members; meetings which are held are attended largely by seniors, i.e., potential employers. Juniors are diffident about speaking in such company, yet the sections could benefit very greatly from the contributions which these juniors could make; they have an energy and a freshness of outlook all too often lacking from the make-up of seniors. One's mind boggles at the idea of a series of junior sections, but it would be worth while for the A.A.L. to consider how far it could re-model itself in this direction.

In the history of the A.A.L. there are two things which it has done especially well. One is to provide means whereby younger members of the profession can learn to speak in committee and in public; where experience of committee work can be obtained, and sometimes also the joys of holding office. There must be many public librarians who never cease to bless their experiences in the A.A.L., as a preparation for the posts they now hold. The other thing is the organisation of correspondence courses for professional examinations. I incline more and more to the view that the L.A. should assume responsibility for these courses; it offends my sense of what is proper that the Association should accept responsibility only for the standards and for the examination papers, leaving it to voluntary labour to provide the correspondence courses. It would seem to be a proper extension of the Education Department's functions to take over the responsibility for these courses, and the approaching end of the "Martin era" seems a good time to look into this.

Failing any dramatic developments, the A.A.L. can simply carry on as usual, and this is no doubt what will happen. But it may be forced to consider consequential changes if a Municipal Libraries Section comes into existence; if this were to happen I think it would provide a great impetus towards the development of the A.A.L. into a junior version of all the sections. It would need only a change of view



and emphasis to make this possible now, but so long as the municipal librarians continue to rule the roost within the L.A., there seems no reason to expect any such changes.

#### R. STOKES

*(Director, School of Librarianship, Loughborough College).*

IT IS A HEALTHY thing for an institution to question the reason for its existence from time to time and to consider how adequately it is meeting the just demands which are made upon it. If it is wise, some reorientation of its programme will frequently result. In this present discussion it should be no part of the A.A.L.'s argument to point to its past glories as the major reason for its continuance. Such triumphs are undoubtedly—but they are past. What is needed is a clear statement of the aims and objects of the Association with reasoned arguments as to why this Association is the best one to carry out such work. The chief policy statements of the A.A.L. seem not to have changed very much since the 1930's; yet the profession has changed greatly. Of what importance now is the idea of providing a forum in which the younger assistant can speak without fear of his chief's disapproval? What is the correlation between the publication policies of the A.A.L. and the L.A.? What is the general pattern of the A.A.L. educational policy in the changed circumstances created by the Schools of Librarianship?

It is not simple chance that this present argument has arisen at the same time as the freshly voiced demand for a Municipal Library Section of the L.A. The sections of the L.A. have grown up in a sporadic fashion over the years, and they are now no longer appropriate for the work which needs to be done. What is now needed is not simply an examination of the A.A.L., but of the whole principle and structure of the L.A. Sections, and this should be put in hand immediately.

#### P. D. POCKLINGTON

*(Chief Assistant, Chelmsford P.L.; G.L.D. Education Secretary).*

SO THE A.A.L. is now 60 years old. Amazing, isn't it? Hurrah for 60 glorious years and stand by for a repeat performance! There *will* be a repeat performance, won't there? Another 60 glorious years?

Apparently the issue is in some doubt. Voices can be heard—both from without and within the A.A.L. The voices from without congratulate the Association on its good work in the past and suggest that the time for retirement has now been reached. "Let the Branches now take over; they can do the job just as well if not better." An interesting thought, isn't it, but not one to concern us here and now. We are not unduly worried at our *external* critics; indeed, the A.A.L. rather seems to thrive on criticism. The more the swords are waved and the bugles blown, the stouter our ramparts. But what of the voices from within?

Haven't you heard them at meetings? "What's going to happen to the A.A.L.?" says one. "I'm worried about the A.A.L." another. Are you worried? Am I worried? Perhaps we are just a little. But what about young Fred out at the branch or little Kate who's just failed Entrance for the second time? They're members of the A.A.L. Are they worried? Of course not—they couldn't care less! And there are hundreds more like them; hundreds, possibly thousands of members of this so-called virile association of ours who just couldn't care less about its future. Why?



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Perhaps, in common with "Ginger" Smith, they feel a vast gulf between themselves and their representative body, the A.A.L. Council. Well, let us examine this Council in some detail and see what it is made up of.

Consider the latest Annual Report of the A.A.L. available at the time of writing, that for the year 1953 (*Assistant Librarian*, April, 1954). Included in this report is a list of names of those who attended Council meetings during the year—and what fascinating reading it makes! 53 people are listed as having represented you and me on the A.A.L. Council during 1953. Who are these people? The cream of the under-30's? The chartered librarians of to-morrow with just a sprinkling of the A.L.A.'s and an odd F.L.A. to preserve the continuity of things? Ha! Ha! You'll be lucky! Of these 53 assistant librarians, 3, and only 3, are unqualified! That's interesting, isn't it, especially when one reads in the *L.A.R.* Jan. 1955 that there are still at least 2 unqualified assistants to every one on the Register. And, lest one should be misguided enough to think that the greater majority of these 50 qualified representatives of ours are bright young Associates, let me hasten to add that no less than 35 of them are Fellows.

What does this go to prove? Well, for a start it means that the under 23's have almost no say in Council, and the under 25's don't do so well either. In short, our teen-aged assistants (and surely, if this Association exists for anybody it is for them!) are not likely to have a lot in common with their representatives on the A.A.L. Council.

Let me tell you some more. By custom, no Chief Librarian sits on the A.A.L. Council, but there are no rules or customs so restricting Deputies. Ahhh!—I see you've guessed it already. Yes, there are a number of Deputies amongst our 53—12, in fact. Pretty big Deputies, too, some of them; Hull, Sheffield, Portsmouth—not at all the sort of Deputyships likely to come the way of smart young assistants in their 20's. Still, we must have some heavy guns and elder statesmen on our Council if it is to carry any weight at all with Big Brother, so we will leave our 12 Deputies and pass on to another interesting aspect concerning these 53 representatives of ours.

From the statistical tables printed in the *L.A.R.* Jan. 1955, it will be seen that more than half the public libraries in this country serve populations of under 50,000. There is, of course, nothing remarkable in this. What is, however, if not remarkable at least a trifle disconcerting, is the fact that the 326 libraries serving the smaller population groups supply only 2 Councillors, whilst the remaining 253 libraries furnish 45 Councillors. Not to put too fine a point on it, we have a "big system" Council.

So there we are. Whatever we may feel about the actions of the Council (and I, personally, think they are doing a pretty good job), there can be little doubt that as a representative body of *assistants* it is a little top-heavy. Small wonder, therefore, that to large numbers of our younger members and particularly to those working in small systems, the A.A.L. Council seems a very remote body far removed from the day-to-day problems of assistants.

What of the future? It is of little use to trace the causes of discontent without suggesting ways and means of reform. For years past, Presidential Addresses have called on the younger members to come forward and play a more prominent part in the affairs of the A.A.L., but with little result. Clearly some more concrete form of inducement must be offered.

To begin with, I wonder how many junior assistants realise what

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Councillorship entails. It is all very well to call on the young to "have a go," but they should be given a clear idea of what they are letting themselves in for. The Annual Report states: "There were five Council meetings during the year." Where were these meetings held and how long did they last? Can one get time off to attend? Who pays the Councillors' rail fares? These are all important questions which must be answered for a chap thinking of taking the big step. The Secretary could answer them all with ease, but no doubt has enough to do already without filling in questionnaires from prospective Councillors. Surely a short paragraph in the *Assistant Librarian* as an appendage to the notice calling for nominations would be a sensible move in the right direction. There may well be young people willing and able to serve on the Council who have taken no active steps in the matter because they think Councillorship entails more in time and expense than is actually the case.

Mention of the *Assistant Librarian* brings me to my second point. A frequent complaint at election times is that the names before us are simply names. "Never heard of him," "Who's this one?" "Give the girl a vote"—such comments from assistants conning their ballot papers are familiar to us all. If we really believe in the value of a strong, representative Council, then surely it is well worth while reserving space in the *Assistant Librarian* for election addresses. It may sound a bit strange—possibly a little too political—but surely we, the electorate, have a right to know *something* about these names on the ballot paper. For one thing, it would be useful to know *why* candidates are putting up for election and what they hope to accomplish if successful. To my way of thinking, a short election address by each candidate should be made compulsory, and if the whole of one issue of the *Assistant* were so taken up, I would think the space well used.

My third suggested reform again concerns the election of National Councillors. At present there are two ways of gaining a seat on the A.A.L. Council. One is to contest one of the six National seats, the other is to get on as a regional representative via the divisional committee. At the moment no division (apart from G.L.D.) has more than 2 representatives on the Council, and half of them have only 1. In the circumstances, therefore, divisions naturally choose from their most experienced members the one or two reps. they send to the A.A.L. Council. Quite right and proper, too, but it's hard luck on any of the bright young things who have got on to divisional committees! Unless they're awfully, awfully bright a lot of the gloss will have worn off them before they're considered as divisional representatives. To ensure that there shall be *some* young people on the Council (and this seems to me to be most imperative), I can think of no better way than by putting some form of age-limit on National Councillors, or at least on some of them. Why not 3 out of the 6 seats to be reserved for the under-30's?

Some of you will no doubt have noticed that I have omitted any mention of the special librarians and their representation on the A.A.L. Council. The reason for this is quite simple. They have a very good case, but I'm a public librarian and might well spoil it if I tried to put it.

I have mentioned a few of the factors that I feel may well be the cause of apathy amongst the younger element of the profession and suggested possible solutions.

I think at this stage I would do well to retire gracefully and await the tumult and the shouting. I hope there *will* be some tumult and shouting. But, perhaps you all agree with me? Or is it that you just couldn't care less!

